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Australian Garden

HISTORY



*A Garden to Commemorate Federation
Geelong's 21st Century Garden
A Small Landscape with Great Meaning
C.F Newman Adelaide Nurseryman
Jimbour House, Queensland*



AUSTRALIAN
GARDEN
HISTORY
SOCIETY

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FRONT COVER



Jimbour House, Dalby in Queensland.
Photo: Gloria Cumming

AGHS PEOPLE



In the garden at Kuranui, Liz Dexter (Vic.) looks on as Captain Gunn explains a 'kissing gate' to Joan Young (Vic.).



Admiring the garden at Ashfield, Margaret and Max Bourke (ACT), Fran Faul, Helen Page and Mal Faul (Vic.).



Victor Crittenden (ACT) and Caroline Simpson (NSW) enjoy conversation in the garden at Ashfield. Sadly Caroline died in January and an obituary will appear in the next issue of the journal.



Rain is no deterrent at Pigeon Hill as Fairie Nielsen (Tas.) explains her gully planting to Beverley Joyce and Robert Read (Vic.).



Malcolm Wilson (NSW) and Richard Heathcote (Vic.) rest on their walk at Windgrove Peace Garden.

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The grounds of Government House Sydney: the arrows show the site for the new garden to commemorate the centenary of Australian Federation.
Photo: Courtesy Room 4.1.3.

A Garden to COMMEMORATE the CENTENARY of FEDERATION

To celebrate the Centenary of Federation the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales initiated a competition for the design of a new garden within the grounds of Government House, Sydney. **Robert Griffin** discusses the project.

THE BACKGROUND

The Government House Conservation and Management Plan, while recommending the development of a Garden Master Plan, also contained specific policies for the gardens and grounds. The area of the South Eastern Gardens, which included the 1980s tennis court and the Spring Walk was described as "confused and without identity or character" and the tennis court was considered an intrusive element that should be removed. The Plan recommended that this area be "redesigned and reformed".

The Conservation Philosophy contained in the Master Plan for Government House Garden in Sydney identifies change as being a constant and essential part of the character of the garden.

The Master Plan also recommended that the area of the South Eastern Gardens be redesigned. The garden beds and grassed areas were assessed as having little or no significance and the area was identified as one possessing the opportunity for change and development. While change may involve conservation actions, *Outstanding new design and craft skills are a further area in which change*

could be managed. The garden at Government House represents a highly significant example of design, and regrettably, not all subsequent changes have reflected this level of skill. There is a great opportunity at Government House to use the best available local landscape design and horticultural skills to redesign components of the garden when change is necessary. This would consolidate Government House in the public mind as a symbol of national excellence.

This approach, the introduction of contemporary landscape design into the garden whilst respecting the integrity of historic elements or compartments, is consistent with the 'To Furnish the Future' policy adopted for the conservation and ongoing presentation of the interiors of Government House. It also recognises that Government House is not an 'historic house museum' frozen in time, but a 'working house', where ongoing and future development of the garden and grounds must be of the highest standard and, ideally, showcase the best of New South Wales landscape and garden design.

The Centenary of Federation in 2001 provided an ideal opportunity to commence this project as Government House has important associations to the period of Federation, early Governor-Generals of Australia and the newly federated Commonwealth. It was proposed that the South Eastern Garden site be used to create a new garden to commemorate the Centenary of Federation.

background: Ticket to a talk given by Peter Watts, Director of the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales and Chairman of the Australian Garden History Society, on the results of the competition for the Federation Garden at Government House Sydney.

To achieve the highest standards of design and horticultural skills for this new garden, a two-stage design competition was held for New South Wales-based firms listed with the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects.

THE DESIGN COMPETITION

The project outcome, as stated in the Competition Brief, was for *a conceptual design for a garden in the southern portion of the Eastern Gardens of Government House. The design should respond to the adjacent garden compartments of the Eastern Terrace and Forecourt Lawn and express in some manner the significance of Federation whilst demonstrating the highest level of contemporary, innovative design skills.*

The brief encouraged the development of project teams with an interdisciplinary approach to develop a garden design that demonstrated the best of contemporary landscape design, horticultural skill and environmental art. The brief also stated that the term 'garden' was used in the widest sense, that the garden may include any form of landscape or environmental art and could have the most simple of landscape treatments or more complex solutions. The budget for the project was to be between \$10,000 and \$200,000.

The design competition consisted of two stages - Expressions of Interest and Concept Designs by short-listed applicants. A Selection Committee was formed to assess the Expressions of Interest received and select five applicants to prepare preliminary designs which would then be presented to the Selection Committee, which had the option of recommending one, or if need be, none of the designs to the Trust for implementation.

The Selection Committee comprised:

Peter Watts, Director, Historic Houses Trust (Chair); Dr James Broadbent, Senior Curator, Historic Houses Trust; Ian Innes, Horticultural and Landscape Officer, Royal Botanic Gardens; Ron Powell, Public Buildings Project Manager, Dept. of Public Works and Services; Professor James Weirick, School of Landscape Architecture, University of New South Wales; Helen Lochhead, Urban Design Advisory Service, Dept. of Urban Affairs and Planning; Bridget Smyth, former Director, Urban Design, Olympic Co-ordination Authority (First Stage) and Ann Toy, Government House Supervising Curator (Second Stage).

The Expression of Interest was circulated amongst New South Wales firms listed with the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects. Sixteen responses were received and of these, nine firms provided submissions to proceed to the second stage of the competition. While this response was disappointing in number - it appeared that many firms were busy with existing

projects - a good range of firms submitted, demonstrating a variety of experience and design philosophies.

From the submissions received the Selection Committee chose five applicants to proceed to the second stage. They were:

Andrew Pfeiffer

(Project team: Andrew Pfeiffer & Stuart Drury)

Anton James Design

(Project team: Anton James & Geoffrey Britten)

Context Landscape Design

(Project team: Oi Choong, Nadia Gill & Janet Lawrence)

Johnson Pilton Walker - formerly DCM Sydney

(Project team: Richard Johnson & Adrian Pilton)

Room 4.1.3 (Project team: Vladimir Sitta, Richard Weller, Nathan Greenhill & Tom Griffiths)

In July 2001 a detailed briefing session was held at Government House for these project teams. Each firm was required to prepare two B1 sheets, one with a coloured concept plan and the other with conceptual images/sketches to illustrate the intent of the design. Design intent, strategies, philosophy, plants lists or descriptions and other details were to be included on the drawings. An order of cost to deliver the proposed design, including professional fees, was also to be provided and a presentation made to the Selection Committee, explaining the principles of the scheme.

THE RECOMMENDATION

Following presentations by each of the five finalists, the Selection Committee recommended that the Trust commission Room 4.1.3 to undertake re-design of the south eastern garden area for a new garden to commemorate the Centenary of Federation. The design by Room 4.1.3 was considered strongly symbolic of the Centenary of Federation and its concept, encompassing the entire area identified in the Brief, possesses much strength, particularly the balance it establishes with the adjoining garden compartments. This is achieved through a strong resolution for the site - the clearing away of elements not possessing significance - and the links established to the adjoining compartments. These are the introduction of a principal water element sited on the axis of the fountain of the Eastern Terrace and the contrast provided by a meandering path, with a water rill, to the formal paths of the Eastern Terrace.

Further strengths are that a major new decorative element for the gardens is provided in an almost incidental manner, and the way in which the design resolves the tension between two major compartments of the gardens - the formal Eastern Terrace and the 'pleasure garden' to be re-instated on Western Terrace.

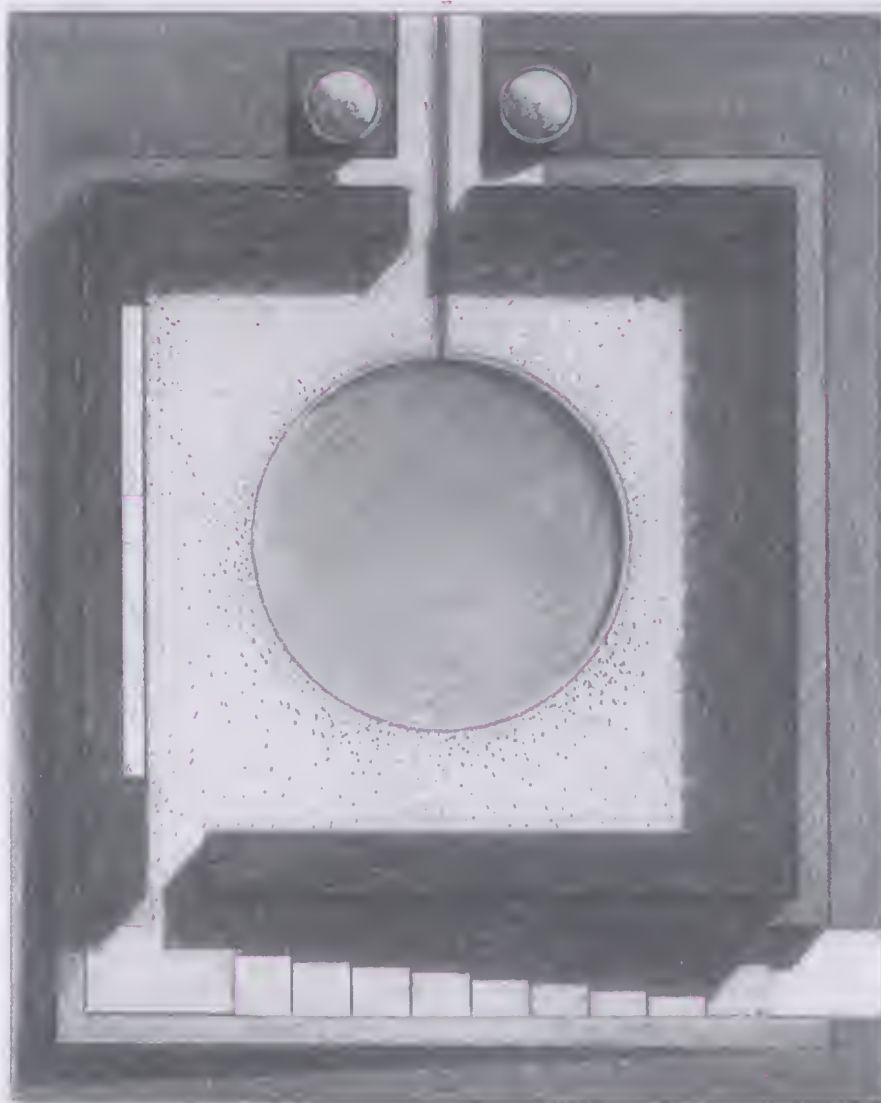
*background: Preliminary 'doodle sketch' from which concept evolved.
Courtesy Room 4.1.3.*

THE DESIGN INTENT SUBMITTED BY THE TEAM FROM ROOM 4.1.3.

The scheme threads a new picturesque circuit through the site. Interrupting this picturesque route is a large granite slab tilted up out of the ground. From under the slab a fine rill of water flows off into the distance and disappears behind some trees and shrubs. Upon the surface of the slab is a brass plaque explaining that visitors should follow the flow of water and that it will lead into a secret garden.

The secret garden is a simple 'green room' made from high, thick hedges set deep in the broader landscape of the Government House grounds. The 'green room' is an 8m x 8m square.

Below: Concept plan submitted by Room 4.1.3. Reproduced by courtesy Room 4.1.3.



PLAN (not to scale)

1. Bronze water rill set in stone in decomposed granite path with special night lighting.
2. Bronze urns containing black and white pebbles standing on sandstone pedestals in squares of terracotta fragments.
3. Sandstone walls form garden I.T.L. 13.0.
4. Mature hedges 3.0m high with special night lighting.
5. Decomposed granite surface.
6. Seat comprised of stone from each Australian state and territory.
7. Bronze and black granite wishing well. Max 300mm deep, with special night lighting effects.
8. Steps to broader garden circuit.

Parts of the room's green walls can be adjusted and fibre optics convert it into a luminous lantern at night.

At the entrance to the room are two large (Grecian) urns, one is full of black pebbles and the other full of white. The plaque invites visitors to select a black or white pebble and enter the green room. The plaque suggests they throw their chosen pebble into a large pool of water as in a wishing well. The water from the rill that leads to the garden spills into this pool.

The plaque also briefly explains that the simple action of selecting a pebble recalls the ancient Greek method of voting on the issues of the day. One might also note that the urns containing the black and white pebbles sit in squares of terracotta fragments. These fragments (*ostroika*) are the same as those upon which the Greeks would inscribe the name of a political figure to be ostracised from the *polis*.

For those wishing to stay after they have 'cast their vote' there is a 7m long solid stone seat. The seat is made by selecting the highest quality stone from each state and territory of Australia and then joining them exactly according to the shapes by which the states and territories are joined on a map of Australia. Visitors then leave the garden by a small gap in the hedges and continue on their picturesque circuit.

This small intervention in Sydney's Government House not only recalls western political traditions and reminds visitors that Australia was formed mainly by the vote, not by violence. It is also mindful of the fact that indigenous Australians were ostracised from the political processes of much of the history of our first 100 years of Federation. Moreover, the design continues a tradition of classical references in gardenesque antipodean follies.



Room 4.1.3. designed the 'Garden of Australian Dreams' at the National Museum in Canberra and has been short-listed in the international competition for a memorial garden to the victims of the attack on The Pentagon on September 11, 2001.

Robert Griffin works with the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales as Curator, Government House Sydney. He was the project manager for the Eastern Garden Design Competition.

GEELONG'S 21st Century Gardens

... The two very different sections of the Geelong Botanic Gardens now counterpoint and complement each other in a marvellous way and epitomise most eloquently what Garden History is really about ...

- a visitor to the Gardens

Geelong's 21st Century Garden extends an existing garden and in so doing acknowledges the many changing aspects of public and botanical gardens, but it also re-focuses attention on Daniel Bunce's 19th century garden. Visitors from the waterfront are drawn in through the new entrance in Eastern Park to discover the historical heart of the gardens.

The 1851 vision for these, the fourth oldest botanic gardens in Australia, was to develop the entire 81h reserve as an intensively managed botanical garden. In practical terms, the site, swept by coastal winds, and the dry climatic conditions obliged Daniel Bunce, the first curator, to modify the extent of the gardens. He established the nursery in the most sheltered section of the reserve and this area became the original Botanic Gardens characterised by a strongly linear design. The surrounding land was planted with conifers and became known as Eastern Park.

Daniel Bunce's embryonic garden was the centre for plant introduction, acclimatisation, research and trial plantings of exotic and native species. To-day many of these survive as much-loved features of the Geelong Botanic Gardens. The Chilean Wine Palm (*Jubaea chilensis*) has been adopted as the symbol of the Gardens, but the Chinese Maidenhair Tree (*Ginkgo biloba*) and the stand of Bunya Bunya (*Araucaria bidwillii*) are equally impressive.

Our colonial forebears sought relief from the antipodean heat in the shade offered by the trees and the illusion of coolness given by the water in pools and fountains, as well as the later attraction of the great Raddenberry fernery.¹ The contemporary visitor is more inclined to enjoy the sun, will drive as much as walk, will be aware of the need for water conservation and may be interested in native plant species and the original use of the area by the indigenous inhabitants.

'... a celebration of contemporary design, local ecology, the seaside environment, the commitment of Friends and Staff, and the place of the Wathmrong people ...'

Chris Dance, designer of the new gardens

The Long Range Master Plan for the Geelong Botanic Gardens, completed in 1994, highlighted



the gardens' important role in education, conservation, research and management of diverse plant collections. In 2000 the City of Greater Geelong committed \$2.1 million towards the construction of the 21st Century Garden. It was opened in September 2002.

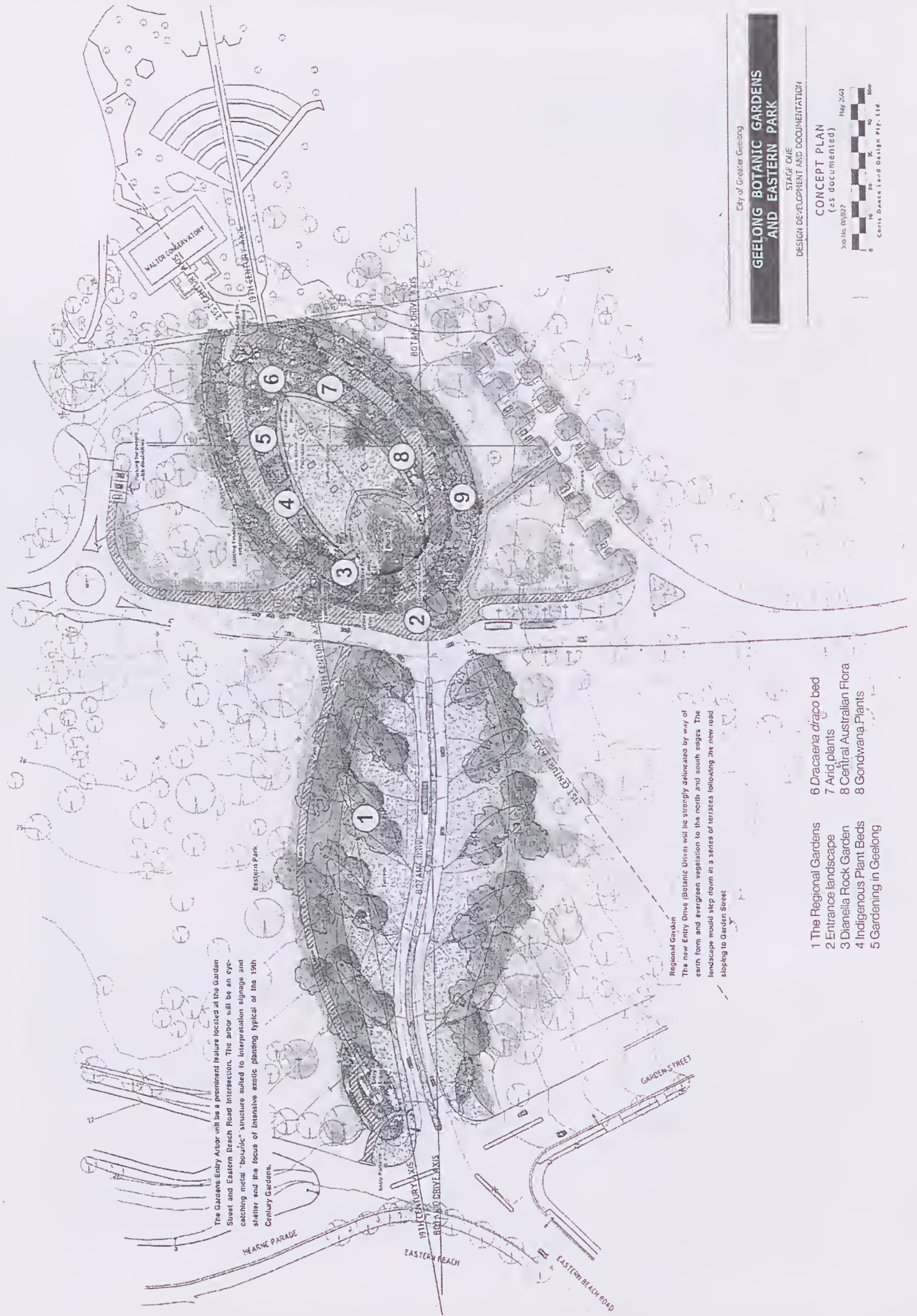
The new garden, designed by Chris Dance Land Design gives a 'strong and dramatic sense of arrival' for visitors and caters for pedestrian and vehicular traffic coming in from the re-vitalised Geelong Waterfront, now a lively tourist precinct. Modern material and landscape elements such as the ornamental fence and sculptures are in startling contrast to the layout of the original 19th century-style garden that is concealed behind this hillside contemporary development.

Geelong's heritage and geographical location as a significant port, is commemorated through the use of boat-shaped rock features, mast-like sculptures and the inspired link to Corio Bay and the Geelong Waterfront.

... in the collaboration between designer and the GBG ... this new 'meeting of minds' has given the new garden both 'diversity and drama' ...

*- John Arnott, Director of the
Geelong Botanic Gardens*

Inside the 21st Century
Garden



The Gardens Entry Arbor will be a prominent feature located at the Garden Street and Eastern Beach Road intersection. The arbor will be an eye-catching metal "botanic" structure suited to interpretation signage and shelter and the focus of intensive exotic planting typical of the 19th Century Gardens.

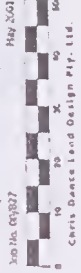
Regional Garden
The new Entry Drive (Botanic Drive) will be strongly delineated by way of earth form and evergreen vegetation to the north and south edges. The landscape would step down in a series of terraces following the new road sloping to Garden Street.

- 1 The Regional Gardens
- 2 Entrance landscape
- 3 Dianella Rock Garden
- 4 Indigenous Plant Beds
- 5 Gardening in Geelong
- 6 *Dracaena draco* bed
- 7 Arid plants
- 8 Central Australian Flora
- 8 Gondwana Plants

City of Greater Geelong **GEELOG BOTANIC GARDENS AND EASTERN PARK**

STAGE ONE
DESIGN DEVELOPMENT AND DOCUMENTATION

CONCEPT PLAN
(as documented)



THE PLANTINGS

1. The Regional Gardens

Perhaps the most important aspect of the entrance garden design is to showcase the indigenous regional flora through the architectural planters that line the entrance driveway, gradually asserting more dominance as the garden entrance is approached.

The 13 boat shaped beds, planted out with indigenous native grasses and lilies, sit comfortably within the Eastern Park landscape which itself has retained remnant native grasses in the understorey – Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*), Wallaby Grasses (*Austrodanthonia* spp.) and Spear Grasses (*Austrostipa* spp.).

Native Lilies

Patersonia occidentalis

P. fragilis

Wallaby Grasses

Austrodanthonia racemosa

A. genticulata

A. setacea

A. caespitosa

Spear Grasses

Austrostipa mollis

A. scabra ssp. *falcata*

A. semibarbata elegantissima

Tussock Grasses

Poa siebierana

P. poliformis

Sedges

Carex tasmanica

Isolepis nodosa

2. Entrance Landscape

The planting in this area needed to complement the strong landscape elements of the grand steps, boat bow, ornamental fence and arbor sculptures. Imposing plants with strong architectural

form, setting the scene for the collections within the garden itself were selected.

Mauritius Hemp *Furcraea foetida*

Taiwanese Sago Palm *Cycas taiungensis*

Queensland Bottle Tree *Brachychiton rupestris*

Grass Trees *Xanthorrhoea johnstonii*

Coast Banksia *Banksia integrifolia*

Everlasting Daisy *Chryscephalum apiculatum*

3. Dianella Rock Garden

The area represents the important research role a botanic garden fulfils. Botanist Geoff Carr is undertaking the taxonomy of this important and diverse group of plants. There are 40 documented species of *Dianella* but Carr's research indicates that this is not truly representative. He believes there are well over 100 species and this collection is intended to support his research as well as displaying the diversity of *Dianella*.

4. Indigenous Plant Beds

To date no public garden has displayed the flora of the Geelong region. The collections will focus broadly on coastal plants, the Grassy Ecosystems and the Heathlands associated with the Brisbane Ranges and the Anglesea Heath for example the endemic and rare Anglesea

Grevillea (*Grevillea infecunda*) and the Golden Grevillea (*G. chryophoea*)

Austral Grass Tree *Xanthorrhoea australis*

Common Everlasting *Chryscephalum apiculatum*

Sticky Everlasting *Bracteantha viscosa*

Chamomile Sunray *Rhodanthe anthemoides*

5. Gardening in Geelong

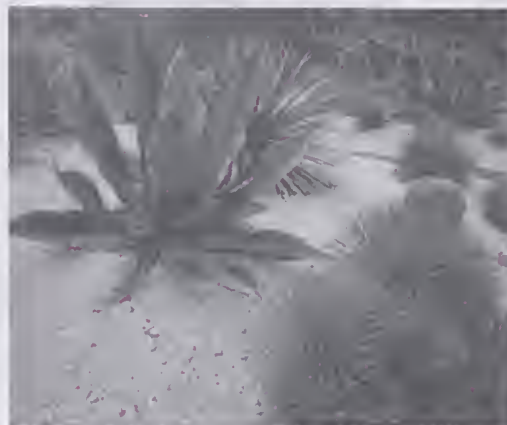
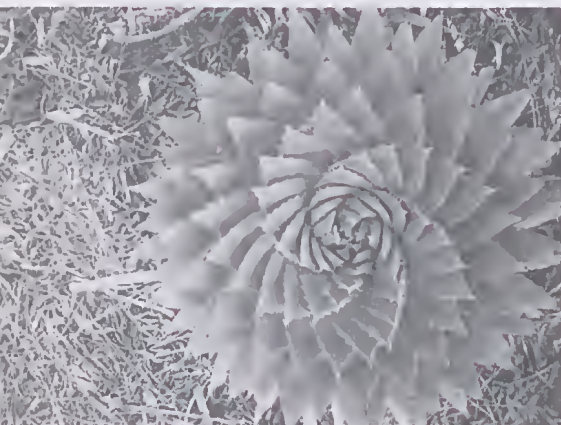
This collection will serve to educate local visitors by displaying indigenous, native and exotic plants that are considered suitable for Geelong gardens and gardeners. The plants do not require much watering, do not have environmental weed potential, may encourage local wildlife and are functional and attractive across a range of applications.

6. *Dracaena draco* Bed

Reputed to be one of the first plants that Daniel Bunce planted in the late 1850s, this imposing specimen of *Dracaena draco* was moved, with Heritage approvals and assistance from Established Tree Transplanters, from its original site in Eastern Park to become a focal point in the 21st Century Garden.

7. Arid Plants

This bed features plants from arid zones of the world, the cacti from the Americas, the succulents of Southern Africa and the arid flora of Central Australia. The specimens, such as the Barrel Cactus (*Echinocactus gnunsonii*) are likely to attract strong visitor empathy through their 'wow' appeal. Aloes, Pelargoniums, Kniphofia and various species of Bulbs also find a place in this area.



Plants in the Arid Bed are designed to have a 'wow' factor.
Photos: Nina Crone

THE PLANTINGS

8. Central Australian Flora

The plants here are all from Central Australia and include a number of endemics – the Central Australian Cabbage Palm (*Livistona mariae*) and the MacDonnell Ranges Macrozamia (*Macrozamia macdonnellii*).

9 Gondwana Plants

This theme was included in the design due to three imposing specimens of Bunya Pine (*Araucaria bidwillii*) which were retained from original Eastern Park planting after consultation with Heritage Victoria horticulturist, John Hawker. Visitors can see a number of classic Gondwana plant families in this area, including a significant collection of Araucariaceae, the majority of which were collected by Alistair Watt during his collecting trips to New Caledonia.

The dramatic *Dracaena draco* is cleverly positioned between the old and

the new gardens giving the visitor an overview of the 21st Century Garden, but also taking them back to the threshold of the 19th Century Garden. Just inside the gates a pair of the figurative bollards that are now a signature feature of the Geelong waterfront lure people into the historic section of Geelong's Gardens linking the 19th and 21st centuries with wit and humour.

- 1 See Ken Duxbury 'Planting and Planning Victorian Ferneries', *Aust-ralian Garden History*, Vol. 13 No. 5 March/April 2002, pp.10-13.

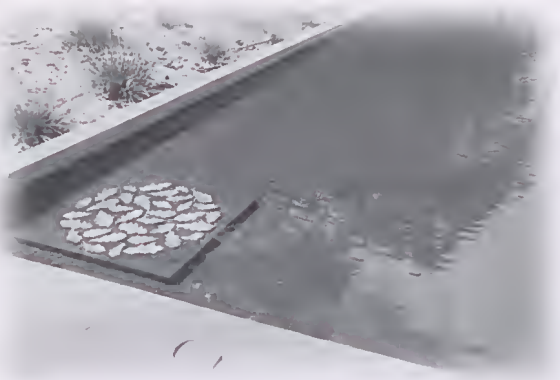
Thanks to John Arnott, Director of the Geelong Botanic Gardens, and to Chris Dance Design for the information in this article.



Welcome to the 19th Century Geelong Botanic Garden.



Decorated bollards in the Geelong Botanic Gardens represent the first curator, Daniel Bunce and a lady naturalist.



left: Detail of the Reflecting Pool.
Photos: Nina Crone

A SMALL LANDSCAPE *with Great Meaning*

BY TORQUIL CANNING

ONE WEEK AFTER THE DEDICATION OF THE \$29M MEMORIAL to the Oklahoma bombing, the Australian Governor-General of the day, Sir William Deane, dedicated a modest memorial in Port Arthur, Tasmania. That memorial, opened on 28 April 1999, represents the complex issues for coming to terms with the past, the present and the future.

Australia's 'European' history, according to author Robert Hughes, starts at Port Arthur. The mellow ruins clustered around Mason Cove represent the last tangible evidence of why we are here. Tasmania's identity has largely been formed from a time conveniently 'post-convict'. Only recently have we started to accept our infamous past.

Following the brutal assassinations of 28 April 1996, threats to erase the place were voiced, suggestions of a name change were mooted, and it looked as if the recent horrors, too horrid to imagine, would shunt the earlier history of Port Arthur back into the safety of the top cupboard.

Was denial once more setting in – just when we had begun to do something about it? After all we had just begun to reach towards a mature understanding of what it means to be a Tasmanian – one that neither denies the past, nor pretties it, nor wallows in an orgy of debilitating self-guilt.¹

THE HISTORIC SITE

Port Arthur is recognised as Australia's most important historic site for reasons at odds with its 19th century picturesque landscape. The Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority has the complex task of revealing this key part of Australian history, a part that has been no more than a curiosity for the last 130 years.

The dichotomy that arises between the picturesque scene of rolling lawns and deciduous trees and the unpalatable truths of human suffering lurking beneath the turf is the clash of the physical landscape with the human landscape. Port Arthur consists of layer upon layer of human landscape from the pre-European, through the convict system, through the town of Carnarvon that occupied the site, to the contemporary managed historic site. Each layer has its own integrity. So which historic landscape should be restored? This is the ongoing challenge for the Management Authority.

As Australians, it is our task to not only see through the surface of Port Arthur to our origins in this country, but to understand objectively the attitudes that prevailed over the last 130 years, from the closure of the penal settlement to today.

Public memorials are a symbolic form of collective memory. But, however well designed, memorials can slip out of the public consciousness. As German writer Robert Musil explains: 'There is nothing more invisible than a memorial'. These invisible memorials – on our intersections, adorning our town halls and in city parks – are physical reminders of how a community once felt.

The landscape as a creative medium is problematic when used as a memorial. Whether it is a pastoral scene along the Somme or the rolling lawns of Port Arthur landscape fogs our power of imagination and blunts our sense of history. Yet, is it not fitting for an historic site to consist of purely landscape elements as the remnants of human occupation decay?

THE MEMORIAL

The Port Arthur Memorial came four years after the shooting tragedy in which a gunman killed 35 people, 22 of whom were in the Broad Arrow Café. Many others were wounded and many more were severely traumatised. The tragedy saw the very worst the human condition can offer, as well as the very best, in the way people selflessly reacted to what fate had given them that day. In the months and years following 28 April 1996, the local community suffered unimaginable pressure: people moved out, friendships and relationships broke down. At the same time community bonds were strengthened as people rethought their future. To those of us not there the events of 28 April 1996 seem both abstract and remote.

The language of commemoration takes many forms: among them prose, poetry, music, film, art, architecture and landscape architecture. The months following the tragedy at Port Arthur saw pens put to paper, oil to canvas, words to songs, notes to music. At the commemoration services, the names of the deceased were read out, candles were lit, doves released and roses laid.



The Memorial at Port Arthur Historic Site incorporates the remains of the Broad Arrow Café, a Reflecting Pool and indigenous plants. Photo: Nina Crone

A temporary wooden cross with a list of the deceased was raised at the edge of Mason Cove, in front of one of Australia's most photographed landscapes.

The site of the new memorial encompasses the Broad Arrow Café, built in the 1950s as a sporting pavilion and change room, later converted to a café and souvenir shop for the historic site, and on April 29, 1996 becoming the most stigmatised site in Australia. Initially, there was little hesitation in starting to demolish the building. With a new visitor centre in the planning stage, it was already earmarked for removal.

A group of four designers was invited to submit concept plans to the newly formed Port Arthur Memorial Committee, but the design process soon ground to a halt as the community was divided over whether to keep or demolish the surviving stone and concrete walls of the Broad Arrow Café. Some thought it too brutal a reminder, others felt the need to preserve the fabric of the site in order to locate the exact spot where loved ones had died.

At this point Jane Lennon and Associates carried out a Social Impact Study of the site to assess its social significance to the local and national communities. The result was that the Broad Arrow Café was considered a socially

significant site; however the community was, and remains, divided about this issue.

As the windowless ruins of Port Arthur are the key to the origins of European Australia, so the ruin of the Broad Arrow is the key to this point in history. Less than a metre below the surface of the new memorial site lie the remains of the crude huts that once sheltered leg-ironed convicts as they manually broke stone, day in, day out. Now sealed beneath hallowed ground, the story of these artefacts has yet to be interpreted.

The rest of the memorial site was formerly the visitor car park, backed by a bluestone quarry and native re-growth. Management guidelines for this area encourage indigenous vegetation. Traditional memorial planting has tended towards symbolic roses and evergreen trees and hedges. The rose bush with its lifelong relationship to seateurs, may well show growth and renewal in a simplistic way, but the evolving growth pattern of a garden is never allowed in such stilted sites of commemoration. We can use the ephemeral nature of plants to acknowledge changing meanings and attitudes towards a memorial. The visual dynamic between the structural elements and plants can be allowed to change over the memorial's lifetime.

To its credit the Port Arthur Memorial Committee named the entire site 'The

Memorial', instead of the usual title of 'Memorial Garden', which relegates planting to an entirely decorative role. Here, plants, with their power to give atmosphere, will ultimately make The Memorial mysterious and historically ambiguous. The planting, all indigenous to South-Eastern Tasmania, will evolve, die off and regenerate, changing the memorial's appearance over time. Meanwhile, the structural elements will cement it in one part of history.

The design brief required tributes to three groups most affected by the tragedy: the deceased, the wounded, and those who gave aid on the day. The temptation to use the names of the deceased was great; however some of the families of the deceased did not want the name of their loved one used on this stigmatised site. The design therefore took a more poetic approach to commemoration. In The Memorial, text is one of the keys to memory. Local resident and writer, Margaret Scott, wrote the lines that are carved into the basalt paving:

Death has taken its toll.

Some pain knows no release.

But the knowledge of brave compassion shines like a pool of peace.

And around the reflecting pool:

May we who come to this garden cherish life for the sake of all those who died.

Cherish compassion for the sake of all those who gave aid.

Cherish peace for the sake of those in pain.

These words acknowledge the ongoing nature of trauma and the fact that this memorial is as much for the living as it is for the dead. This sensitive part of the design was later somewhat derailed when, a day before the dedication, a bronze plaque with all 35 names and an image of the

temporary cross, was tactlessly placed in The Memorial. Though well-meant, this unfortunate plaque remains (now with only 34 names), as does the temporary wooden cross with its own list, diverting attention away from Margaret Scott's thoughtful words. There still seems to be competition to commemorate the Port Arthur tragedy.

Like all cultural landscapes, The Memorial's use and its social significance will change over time. The passing of this generation may well see The Memorial more as a historic curiosity than a sacred site. Port Arthur has one such example already, the avenue of cypress planted to commemorate First World War veterans from the Tasman Peninsula. Although the Memorial Avenue had great social significance 80 years ago, it has virtually none today. The Port Arthur Memorial's power to transcend social change will be its ability to speak to the individual: only time will tell.

The Port Arthur Memorial is about remembering and forgetting. It is a public expression of a particular community's grief. It acknowledges a piece of history that our instincts tell us to forget. The Memorial is a small landscape with great meaning and in the future it may well continue that meaning in the context of an historic landscape.

Torquil Canning is a Tasmanian landscape designer who worked with The Port Arthur Memorial Committee to develop a sensitive and fitting tribute to those caught up in the events of 28 April 1996.

- 1 Peter Hay, 'Port Arthur – where meanings collide', *Island*, Issue 67, 1996, p.70.



'The public expression of a particular community's grief.'
Photo: Sue Keon-Cohen



C.F. Newman and Son's Model Nursery c. 1890s. Looking S from the District Road entrance. The main house is the building in the foreground on the left. Reproduced with kind permission of Alwin Clements.

BY CAS MIDDLEMIS

CONVICTED IN 1871 OF STEALING PLANTS in the Botanic Gardens, Charles Newman was to become one of South Australia's most prominent and respected nurserymen. In later years he sold plant varieties he had cultivated to the Botanic Gardens from which he was accused of stealing.

Within Adelaide gardening circles the account of C.F. Newman and Son's Nursery at Water Gully has often been told. It is a remarkable story of development, expansion and commitment to the nursery industry within a fledgling colony.

The Newman family arrived in South Australia in 1846, only ten years after the colony had been proclaimed.

Charles Newman was eleven years old when he emigrated from Germany with his family. His father Carl Newman (formerly Carl Neumann¹) was a farmer.²

In the early stages of colonial expansion many German émigrés to South Australia dominated the occupations of farming and market gardening.³ Yet the following entry, written in 1909, shows that it took some time for these growers to become established:

Horticulture as a business made extremely slow progress for the first half century of [Adelaide's] colonial history. In the earlier period... fresh fruit was an unattainable luxury. There are still persons living who can remember when almost the only fresh fruit to be had was the water-melon while for cooking purposes pine-melons and pumpkins had to do duty. Bottled fruits were largely imported

*from England and were sold freely in grocers' shops for more than twenty years after the colony was founded.*⁴

The influx of many productive German immigrants to the colony provided industry and wealth. Charles Newman was to be an extremely industrious member of society. By the time he was 20 he had purchased land at Houghton, approximately 17km NE of Adelaide, and built himself a dwelling⁵. In 1857 he married Mary Anne Maria Bales, the daughter of the local hotel licensee, a union that produced 17 children (3 of whom died young).⁶

To obtain money for land purchases and to finance the major project of building a nursery, Newman tendered successfully for building contracts around the district of Tea Tree Gully. It would appear from contemporary photographs of the nursery infrastructure that the experience gained in constructing public buildings greatly benefited the nursery.⁷ At 32 years old Charles Newman had a property that 'covered nearly 500 acres'.⁸

The *Cyclopedia of South Australia*, first published in 1909, states that the Newman nursery at Water Gully 'was founded towards the latter end of the forties'.⁹ Other sources have the nursery being 'established' in 1875.¹⁰ At this time in Adelaide's Botanic Gardens, the Palm House structure was imported from Bremen, Germany, and it was officially opened in 1877.¹¹ At this early stage of Adelaide's development the Botanic Gardens would have been of keen interest to nurserymen and market gardeners like Newman,

especially as it was located so close to where the growers sold their produce at the East End Market.

Charles Newman's interest in the Botanic Gardens was perhaps keener than most for in 1871 'the market gardener of Water Gully, was charged with stealing plants, valued at one pound and ten shillings, from the Botanic Gardens on July 1'.¹² He was convicted and sentenced to one month's hard labour in goal by the magistrate. A previous conviction and fine, for a similar offence, had been registered.¹³

In 1868, the Director of the Botanic Gardens, Dr. Schomburgk, had reported that due to:

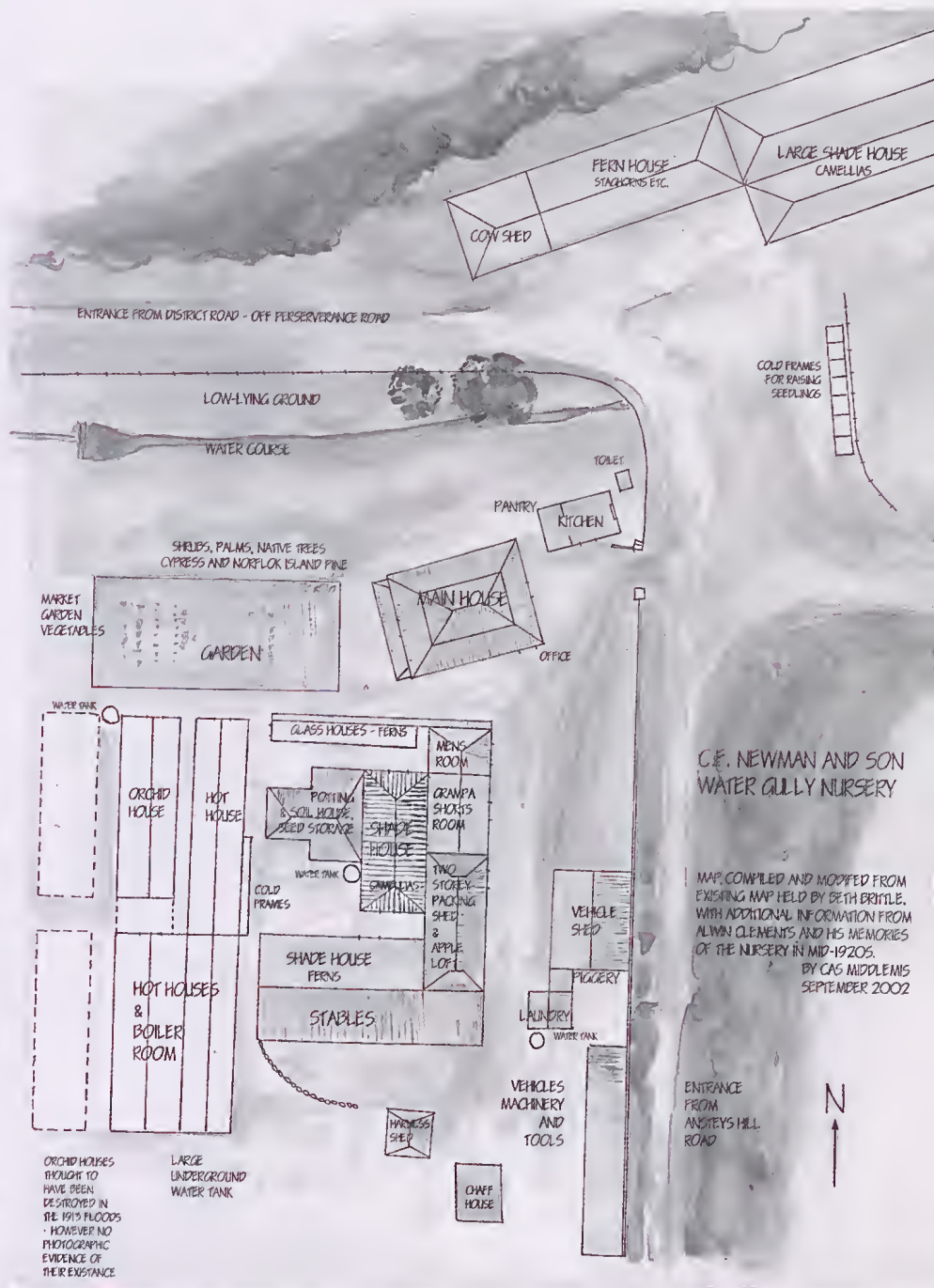
...great many depredations [sic] having largely been committed in the Garden, it was resolved that a reward of 25 pounds should be offered to any persons who gave such information as may lead to the conviction of any persons stealing plants or flowers. Also that advertisement to that effect should be inserted twice in the daily and weekly papers and placards should be stuck up on several places in the Gardens'.¹⁴

According to evidence given by the son of a Garden employee, Newman was seen in the Botanic Gardens stooping over some geraniums and was later identified nearby in East Terrace. He was arrested by Detective Doyle 'who found no plants on him'.¹⁵ Newman claimed that he was not in the Gardens and had a witness to that fact, adding that it was 'curious how you always pitch upon me'.¹⁶

At court, the Newman case came before Mr. S. Beddome, PM and Dr. Schomburgk, JP¹⁷ (the Botanic Gardens Director). In October of that year Detectives Mortimer and Doyle attempted to claim the reward of twenty-five pounds from the Governors of the Botanic Garden for arresting Newman stealing plants, but were unsuccessful.¹⁸

This episode was just a brief interruption to Charles Newman's work in developing one of the colony's most significant nurseries. Operating initially under the title of the Model Nursery, it was later known as C. F. Newman and Son.¹⁹

The site at Water Gully was considered to be 'one of the finest of its kind in the State',²⁰ and it included a nursery, market gardens and an orchard. There are excellent contemporary photographs, which show the main house, and the nursery buildings, including shade, glass and hot houses. The orchard, 'covering 100 acres of ground'²¹ was on a hillside to the NE of the nursery buildings. A report from a Field



Naturalists' excursion to the nursery in 1898, gives the reader just a brief glimpse into the past:

In driving up the private road leading to the nursery, the native lilac, as Kennedya monophylla is popularly known, was often seen and as frequently admired. On reaching the house Newman met the party...[and] conducted them through the conservatories. Here were to be seen gay cinerarias, sweet-scented hyacinths, . . . lovely orchids from other climes surpassing in beauty even those already gathered in the field, fragrant gardenias . . . and many other choice blooms. Ferns, palms and decorative plants generally lent a pleasing setting to Flora's many gems. In a shade house some camellia bushes of unusual height, and bearing many flowers, evoked much

C.F. Newman and Son Water Gully Nursery Map compiled and modified from existing map held by Beth Brittle, with additional information from Alwin Clements and his memories of the nursery in the mid-1920s. Drawn by Cas Middlemis in September 2002.



top: Nursery ruins looking N from inside the former hothouse. Newman designed a complex water management system with water tanks inside nursery buildings making plant watering easier. Rainwater was collected in tanks above and below ground level.

Photo: Cas Middlemis, August 2002.

above: Looking NE over nursery ruins. In the foreground are the foundations of the hot houses. The standing walls to the right are the dividing wall between the shade house and the stables, and beyond is the packing shed wall. Part of the main house walls (centre) is also still standing.

Photo: Cas Middlemis, August 2002.

commendation. One of the principle [sic] objects of the visit was to see Mr. Newman's daffodils. Out in the open air is quite a plantation of these popular flowers, with their many varieties. Although a little early there are still hundreds in bloom, and these, with an almost equal number of hyacinths adjacent, formed a pretty picture, and make the air fragrant with their perfume. Later on these beds will be gay with tulips.²²

C.F. Newman and Son also established a shop at 17 Rundle Street, Adelaide where from 1893 to 1902,²³ the buyer could purchase 'fresh flowers daily, mixed bird seed, agricultural seeds, flower and vegetable seeds'.²⁴ All the Newman children were employed at some stage at the nursery or in the shop, but they were not paid cash for their services.²⁵ The benefits of such an extensive family cannot be overlooked.

Mrs. Newman also assisted greatly in the success of the nursery and was by all accounts

an amazing woman. 'She taught young apprentices the art of floral arrangements, wreath and posies' and for over 25 years she drove down to the East End Markets to take the produce to market.²⁶

Charles' sixth son, Frederick Christopher Newman, remained at the nursery working with his father. Other family members were also involved within the industry either setting up on their own, or under the C. F. Newman and Son name. George and John Newman are listed as gardeners working out of Chain of Ponds and Inglewood in South Australia²⁷. The eldest son, Charles, moved to Perth to set up a branch of the company interstate. Henry (known as Harry), Alfred and Walter also moved to Western Australia, the latter two established orchards and market gardens.²⁸

In 1894 the nursery published an extensive sales catalogue. Along with plant descriptions and illustrations, it offered planting advice and landscaping services:

*Having secured the services of one of the best Landscape Gardeners of the colony, we are prepared to furnish plans and estimates for the laying-out and planting of new gardens or for re-laying old ones. We are also enabled to build ferneries, rockeries [etc], in the most handsome way.*²⁹

Several Australian plants such as *Chiantinus dampieri* (Sturt's Pea)³⁰ are listed along with an imported German collection. Under the title 'Last year's novelties in vegetable seeds' is listed Reeves' Early Adelaide Market Cabbage:

*This new variety has been raised by a local market gardener, and has been grown by him to supply the Adelaide market during the last two seasons. Its special features are great productiveness, hardiness and that it is very early. It may be planted close together, and will stand the dry weather well. Per packet, 6d.*³¹

At Water Gully the Newmans also propagated new plant varieties. This is highlighted on an invoice of plants sold to the Botanic Gardens.³² Varieties of coleus included 'Mrs A. Palm' (who was Georgina, the Newmans 5th child) and 'Mrs H. Bothe' (Wilhelmine, the 4th child), as well as 'Mrs. C.F. Newman'.³³

The nursery's extensive involvement with exhibiting plants is illustrated in the following article from 1899:

*Mr. Newman's connection with city flower shows dates back to 1871 and ever since that time he had regularly exhibited and won a large number of prizes for choice blooms and plants.*³⁴

At the South Australian Horticultural and Floricultural Society Show held in 1907 the Nursery 'carried off 120 prizes for fruits, vegetables, flowers and plants, 97 were firsts'.³⁵

On 20 June 1899 Charles Newman died unexpectedly of head injuries when he fell from his horse on his way home from a council meeting. Among those who paid their last tributes and respects were 'numerous Rundle street shopkeepers, several gardeners, [with] the director and employees of the Botanic Gardens represented by Mr. Gilpin'.³⁶

With the death of Charles Newman the family began to understand the financial situation of the nursery. Poor business deals in setting up in Western Australia gravely affected the Adelaide side of the business³⁷. Then in 1913 several extensive hailstorms destroyed all the glass houses with large quantities of valuable plant stock lost through flooding,³⁸ all of which seriously impacted on the viability of the nursery.

When Harry Newman returned to Adelaide from Perth, he assumed control of Water Gully. On Harry's return, Frederick, who had been running the nursery since the death of their father, left in 1925 to set up his own nursery business in Tea Tree Gully. It would appear that during Harry's charge the nursery's fortunes further declined, reflecting economic trends both locally and nationally. The rich 'harvest' of the nursery industry in the later part of the 19th century was not reflected in the early 20th century. When Mrs. C.F. Newman died in 1932 aged 94 years, the children sold the nursery.³⁹

Moughton, May 20th 1887

Dr. Schomburgk Director Botanic Gardens

Dr. to C. F. NEWMAN,

Descendants of Charles Newman, Miss Beth Brittle and Mr. Alwin Clements, have done extensive research into the family history but there are many gaps in the knowledge of how the nursery operated. It would appear that there are no existing order books, nursery employee lists and other paperwork necessary to run such an extensive concern. However, one interesting document found in the Botanic Garden Archives is an invoice to Dr. Schomburgk dated May 1887, which lists plants sold to the Gardens by C. F. Newman.

Today the extensive foundation ruins of the Newman nursery lie nestled within the Anstey Hill Recreation Park, Tea Tree Gully. Their tangible presence is a stimulating reminder to the garden historian of the fragile nature of our built environment and the forces of nature.

FURTHER PHOTOGRAPHS

Those interested in seeing other early photographs of the nursery held by the State Library of South Australia should log on to www.slsa.sa.gov.au then, via 'catalogues' go to the 'Mortlock Library South Australian Database'. Highlight 'keywords', type in 'Newman's Nursery' and follow the directions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sincere thanks to Mrs Suzanne Hall, the daughter of Frederick Christopher Newman, Miss Beth Brittle, the grand-daughter of John William Newman, and Mr. Alwin Clements, the grandson of Charlotte Newman for so generously sharing their knowledge and stories of the Newman family.

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Cas Middlemiss developed an interest in garden history while living in England. On returning home she undertook academic studies in history and geography to further this interest. While living in Perth she contributed a number of West Australian entries to The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens. Her move to Adelaide is bringing new subjects for her enthusiasm.

background: An invoice for plants sold to the Botanic Gardens, Adelaide by C.F. Newman in 1887. Courtesy the Botanic Gardens Adelaide Archive Collection.

Jimbour House

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY GLORIA CUMMING



Jimbour House with red bougainvillea flourishing in the warmth of the northern wall. An unobtrusive netting fence separates the vegetable patch in the foreground from the cutting garden.

Jimbour House can be seen on the right some 27km along the Jandowae Road from Dalby. With its attendant buildings, all partially obscured by trees, it stands on a plateau on one of the trailing, western foothills of the Bunya Mountains in Queensland. The history of this complex, along with its lands, is a history common to most pastoral properties.

More often than not sought out in the early years of the New South Wales Colony by those in employment of others, either well-heeled individuals or agricultural companies, the chosen land once decided upon, was initially squatted on, and later leasehold arrangements were made with the Colonial Administration.

Immediately a primitive shelter of sorts was put together, to be followed by a more substantial one – generally of two rooms built of local material. To this a wife would be brought. Hard work and heartache followed before financial success allowed for the building of a more permanent house. The first home was then allowed to decay or was put to other uses. Later still, providing fortune smiled, this second home would be extended or, in Jimbour's case, a fine mansion built to show the world that one's aspirations had been attained, that 'one had arrived' – all within a time frame of less than two generations.

Rarely did the property remain in the hands of the original owners. Generally there would be a succession of owners, because the purse was never deep enough to withstand the changing

demands of nature such as flood, fire, drought, disease, the ravages of animals and weeds, or ever-evolving social changes – the fleeing of employees to the goldfields, the formation of workers' unions, the granting of Adult Suffrage (1905 in Queensland) which curtailed the power held in parliament by the squatters, the loss of land through various Closer Settlement Acts, the continual need to keep up with market demands and new husbandry practices, the never-ending maintenance and labour costs, the ever-lurking fear of being unable to gain urgent medical help when needed, and finally the worrying thought that perhaps one's family would look upon their inheritance as a burden.

THE PROPERTY

Such has been Jimbour's history. In 1841 Henry Dennis sought out land for Richard Sougall who had gained a government licence to select 'beyond the limits of settlement'. Dennis selected 300,000 acres on the northern Darling Downs, an area known to the local aborigines as Jimba, meaning 'lush grasses'. By 1845 Sougall was bankrupt. Disease had decimated his mob of 11,000 sheep and the Bank of Australasia, in which he had sunk his money, had collapsed. He sold out to Thomas Bell.

In 1867, fire burnt down the Bell family home, Sougall's former home of slabs. A bluestone building replaced it. During 1873-74 architects R.G. Sutor and A.W. Voysey prepared plans for Jimbour House. In the French



Renaissance Style, the building was akin to Parliament House in Brisbane. Except for the Welsh roof tiles, local materials were used for the house. Completed in 1877 the bluestone house incorporated the kitchen and the staff quarters in the main house. The Bells 'had arrived'.

Unfortunately it was not for long. Thomas Bell had died in 1874 and his son, the Honourable Joshua Peter Bell, inherited the property. Times were hard for most, including the Colonial Government. Banks collapsed. Jimbour was considerably reduced in size. J.P. Bell died in 1881. His family inherited a burden. They were forced to sell in July 1912 thus ending a 68-year association with Jimbour.

The property passed through other hands lapsing into neglect and decay until finally Wilfred Adams Russell bought it in 1923. Then a period of resurrection and continuing maintenance ensued. The present fine state of Jimbour is a tribute to succeeding generations of the Russell family.

THE GARDENS

The approach to the gardens surrounding Jimbour House is understated. A simple all weather road with glimpses of headstones among the natural grasses on the western slopes. Past the four-storey high water tower that provides staff quarters and accommodates a small information centre. Along an avenue planted in 1938 with jacarandas that have somehow managed to survive the dry heat of summer and the cold blasts of winter. Then straight on past the formal sandstone pillars at the entrance and into the garden itself.

The immediate impact is of a garden protected from the ravages of the prevailing easterly and westerly winds by massive trees that have reached maturity. Most are native to the area

– the turnip-shaped bottle tree (*Brachychiton rupestris*) found growing along the foothills of the Jimbour-Cooranga-Bell district, the silky oak (*Grevillea robusta*), the hoop pine (*Arancaria cunninghamii*) and *Ficus* spp., all found in the nearby Bunya Mountains. The Bell family planted many of these trees late in the 19th century. However nothing lives forever and sometime within the next five years or so, thought will have to be given to the replacement of these trees.

The house is of two storeys running on an east-west axis. The front faces south. The façade is symmetrical with a central curve. Slender stone columns support the upper balcony. The building material is light coloured sandstone. The design of the front garden, that some may term a forecourt, reflects the design elements of the façade: the shape, the size, the symmetry and the colour.

Centrally placed is a goldfish pond with an unobtrusive fountain. Circling this pond is a hedge some 600mm high and of equal width, cleverly planted with *Ficus pumila* (Syn. *F. repens*), its heart-shaped leaves constantly clipped to reveal light green and russet colourings. No cat would ever attempt to scale this hedge.

To either side of the pond are symmetrically placed rose beds of predominantly pink, yellow and white roses. These beds are surrounded by splendidly kept lawns cut through by paths entered through wooden-framed bowers – one covered in *Rosa banksiae lutea*, the other three in Rangoon creeper (*Quisqualis indica*). Symmetrically placed within the lawns and away from the rose beds, are tall palm trees, their trucks in sympathy with the shape of the stone columns. At the extremities of this elongated front garden are massive pergolas, their size in keeping with the nearby trees. Red bougainvilleas cover them. Pergolas and bowers are painted in a faint yellow colour – that of the sandstone.

left: Palm studded lawns in the front garden of Jimbour House that faces south over the black soil plains of the Darling Downs. The circular carriage drive encloses the rose garden.

right: Looking west across the palm lawn and rose garden to the massive *Ficus* spp. in the south-western corner of the garden.



above: A battle-scarred bottle tree (*Brachychiton rupestris*) at Jimbour House. These trees are endemic to the Jimbour area.

right: The sun drenched vegetable patch protected from the southerlies by a thick bank of trees.

Running parallel to the front of the house, and on the southern boundary, is a stone wall barely knee-high. The wall rises from a terrace below and acts very much like an English 'ha-ha'. Centrally placed on the terrace is a swimming pool built in 1950. To either side of the pool are long areas given over to the growing of citrus on the left and to stone and pome fruits on the right.

In the north-eastern corner of the garden, behind a hedge of orange flowering *Tecomaria capensis*, lies the flourishing vegetable garden, with the fowl run and compost heaps nearby. There is something appealing about this area. A vegetable garden and a few chooks would have been a constant feature of any rural property as a diet of damper and salted meat, washed down with billy-tea, led to scurvy and a shortened lifespan.

Harking back to the old days is a large *Buddleia madagascariensis*, a rank semi-climber with spikes of golden flowers in winter. This species was used as a windbreak around outhouses such as fowl runs on many a property. Across one part of the back wall scrambles another climber *Solanha*

maxima, its huge cup-shaped cream flowers complementing the stone colouring. The most eye-catching climbers are the gigantic red bougainvilleas framing four entrances to the house. The red, yellow and cream colours also feature in unobtrusive under-planting beneath trees – *Acakypias*, *Russelia equisetiformis* and *Clivia miniata*. Tying the whole garden together is the splendid russet coloured fine gravel used in the pathways and the driveway – the correct choice for the environment.



Of manageable size the garden is designed so that it effectively reduces the architectural folly of Jimbour House to a friendly home. Excellently maintained it is a credit to all involved and a tribute to its designer, Henry Stokes, of whom we need to know more.

Gracing all is the view. In the words of 'Banjo' Paterson ...

*The vision splendid of the sunlit plain extended,
And at night the wondrous glory of the
everlasting stars.*

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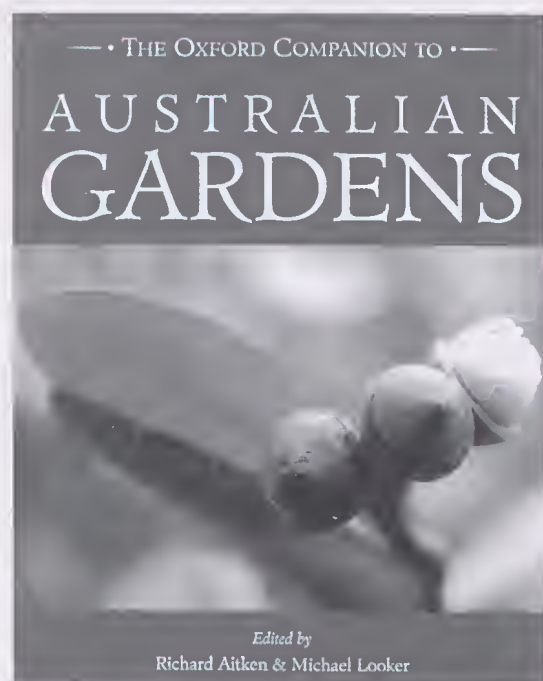
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Gloria Cumming lived on Jimbour Station while teaching in schools on the western edge of the Darling Downs. Now retired, she is pursuing her passion for Australian history and her collection of books on history and architecture.



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PAUL FOX

SO MUCH WORK, SO MANY CONTRIBUTIONS, so much new and fascinating information summarises this landmark in Australian Garden History scholarship. To assemble more than 1500 entries by over 200 contributors, and to cross-reference and index them, is an extraordinary

intellectual and organisational achievement. Moreover, to allow the different voices of individual contributors rein while sustaining an overall intellectual coherence and vision marks out one of the many achievements of the editors.

The range of information found in the *Companion* is extraordinary. It ranges from James Broadbent's witty entry on the Tyre Swan to his thoughtful and wide ranging reflections on Ornament and Furniture, to Spirituality, Joan Law-Smith's spiritual journey from Macedon to Japan, and Paul Thomson's personal reflection on Light. And if this wasn't enough, there is also an excellent collection on Hoses and Sprinklers, Lawn Mower and Tools by Suzanne Hunt which allow another perspective on Australian gardening. While the entries of Jeannie Sim, Jan Seto and Anita Angel will allow many readers to learn more about garden history in Queensland and the Northern Territory.

There is so much else to savour and enjoy in this volume. Who could forget that wonderful line, found in parenthesis in the entry Australia 1945–1965: 'you must have come from that man Stevens' describing how nurserymen responded to customers asking for agaves, yuccas and bamboos in post-war Melbourne? Such stories provide invaluable information about changing horticultural tastes and complement the entry on Peter Valder whose nursery has had such an influence on the Southern Highlands' gardens.

Every reader will pause and take breath as they discover some new nugget about Australian Gardening in the *Companion*. Perhaps my favourite discovery was the Wimmera garden of Albert Lindner. On reading about it, I immediately felt like getting in the car to see it. In a different vein, the entries on important post Second World War landscape architects Ilma

Berzins, Marion Blackwell, Grace Fraser, Emily Gibson, Bruce Mackenzie, Beryl Mann, Betty Maloney and Jean Walker, John Oldham, John Stevens and Jean Verschuer afford an opportunity to be read about in one book. One awaits Anne Latreille's forthcoming book, and Andrew Saniga's Doctorate, to read in greater detail about these contributors to an Australian landscape sensibility and all the other research which will arise from the publication of the *Companion*.

In this work, the illustrations are as illuminating as the text. Many have not been seen before while many have been selected with an acute and quirky visual sensibility. As a result they attract and guide the reader's attention to the major themes of the work in a delightful, entertaining and thought-provoking way. Moreover the geographic range of the photographic selection reinforces the intent of the *Companion* to cover the whole of Australia, not just the eastern seaboard. For instance the use of little known images of the 1920s Northern Territory is wonderfully refreshing. Who will ever forget the marvellously evocative photograph of a Northern Territory verandah garden? In this instance a picture says as much as a thousand words about a garden culture blown away by the First World War in all but distant parts of empire. My favourite is the wonderful Barwon Valley lookout tower, Geelong: a startling piece of sculptural modernism of c.1937. If only there were more abstract beauty on a par with this in today's gardens and landscapes ...

One of the most powerful comments in the *Companion* comes from T. R. Garnett's entry on Gardening wherein he suggests 'the styles of gardening and the varieties of plants grown generally followed – and still follow – those of other countries'. This observation made me go back and re-read the *Companion* to verify, test it and reflect on whether the *Companion* might have had an entry at its beginning called 'Australian Gardening' that set the scene in a different way to the chronological entries. It might have addressed what was distinctive about Australian gardening, and reflected upon whether the changes we are seeing in newly designed public spaces will eventually re-define Australian domestic gardens.

That the *Companion* allows us to look to the future as well as the past is perhaps its greatest contribution to the continuing discovery of Australian gardening culture. Long may it be read!

Paul Fox is a Melbourne writer and historian with a particular interest in the social and cultural history of gardens and natural history. A contributor to many journals and publications, including The Oxford Comp-

panion to Australian Gardens, Paul is an Honorary Fellow at the Australian Centre at the University of Melbourne. He is presently working on 'Governor La Trobe, memory and environment', an article for the La Trobe Journal and his book Clearings is to be published in 2003.

ROOTED IN HISTORY – STUDIES IN GARDEN CONSERVATION

Various authors

Published by National Trust Enterprises,
London, 2001

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REVIEWED BY TREVOR NOTTLE

While focussed solely on the gardens of the National Trust (UK) *Rooted in History* presents a broad cross-section of the disciplines involved in garden conservation, disciplines that apply no matter where gardens are preserved and restored as a part of our heritage. Questions of philosophy, research, management, interpretation, education, professionalism, natural history, social history and horticulture are addressed by the National Trust's in-house experts – garden advisers, head gardeners, historians, architects, and taxonomists among them.

As well as a series of essays by the assembled experts there are supplementary case studies of particular gardens such as Hidcote Manor, Stowe, Sissinghurst Castle, Stourhead and elsewhere. Given the conservation possible when backed by state lotteries, flourishing mass tourism and a strong, well-funded organisation the matters discussed between these pages may well cause Australian readers to sigh heavily and dream. Yet there remains much within the book that reflects favourably on efforts here to conserve our own precious heritage gardens.

To better understand the scope of challenges faced by gardeners and conservators, readers could do no better than to read this book. It is well written, well published and gives a wide ranging insight into the behind-the-scenes work and research that ensures gardens can be conserved for the future, accessed by the public and still retain a high degree of authenticity.

Trevor Nottle is the manager of the TAFE School of Horticulture in South Australia and author of numerous books, particularly on the subjects of old-fashioned roses and gardening in a Mediterranean type climate.

GARDENS OF THE IMAGINATION

THE 23RD ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE HELD IN HOBART,
4-6 OCTOBER 2002.

THE LECTURE PROGRAM FRIDAY 4 OCTOBER
& SATURDAY 5 OCTOBER

BY JOHN TAYLOR

Tasmania in the spring! Trees in new leaf and gardens full of those plants found in the fashionable books and magazines but which don't grow in Queensland. The Garden History Conference is on again.

So off we went with high hopes, and we weren't disappointed. The 23rd Conference of the Society delivered thoughtful papers, good discussion, some partying, and of course visits to wonderful gardens. And beautiful Georgian architecture, in Hobart and the countryside, as well.

The theme was 'Gardens of the Imagination' but the nine papers were really about garden design, gardens in art and architecture, and the links and the tensions between nature (wilderness) and cultivated landscapes (gardens). This latter topic kept emerging and made one wonder about the garden in garden history, and whether we take it for granted.

David Hansen presented wittily on John Glover, painter of colonial Van Diemen's Land (could he paint gum trees? did he want to? does it matter?) and spent some time on the famous 1834 painting of Glover's house and garden at Mills Plains. The garden contained mostly European plants set out neatly in beds, and so can be read as the taming and the bringing of order to the wilderness.

In talking about his garden at his new house on the Tasmanian Riviera (the north coast near Stanley) **Daniel Thomas** described his attempts at eco-minimalism.

By this he means treating the native vegetation growing around the house as a garden, with minimum intervention, ie gardening. In the end there were more interventions than originally planned, due to the need for access and parking and fire protection. And opportunities for artistic embellishment were taken. But this talk was really

about nature as a garden, retaining and enjoying the wilderness, and not wanting to tame it at all.

Jerry de Gryse and **Peter Adams** both spoke about wilderness, its psychological qualities and its importance to our occupation of the planet. One wondered whether this really was the Garden History Conference. Perhaps we had wandered into the wrong room after morning coffee and joined a meeting of the Wilderness Society.

Jane Lennon spoke about the cultural landscapes as World Heritage, and claimed that the vast South Western Tasmanian Wilderness was really a cultural landscape because the major vegetation type within it, button grass plains, is the result of Aboriginal burning over many centuries. Aboriginal gardening in the wilderness?

Jane also showed the painting, by Henry Burns, of native river red gum being carted on a dray from the site of the Melbourne botanic gardens to make way for the planting of exotic garden plants. Not surprisingly, in wanting to feel at home in a new land the colonists of the Port Phillip District wanted a European garden, as had John Glover at Mills Plains, and the native vegetation had to go.

Native plants and landscapes received more attention in the remaining papers.



Stone and glass installation
in the wilderness at
Windgrove Peace Garden.

Deborah Malor's paper certainly wasn't about wilderness or the bush – quite the opposite. It described how small spaces in and around houses are embellished with plants and art, and how this links with the utility of the spaces. Usually these very small gardens (stretching the word again – a few pot plants in a passage, a window box, a single climbing plant on a fence) are not recorded, or are recorded by accident in the backgrounds of paintings of other subjects. The paper contrasted the containment of these gardens with their ability to excite the observer's imagination to see larger landscapes.

Christopher Vernon described architect Marion Mahony Griffin's and landscape architect Hardy Wilson's visits to Tasmania, their interest in the native plants and vegetation, and how the impact of the visit could be traced in their subsequent work.

Ann Neale spoke about the native plants in the designs of Edward La Trobe Bateman, an English artist and designer who lived in Australia from 1852 to 1869. Bateman drew inspiration from Australian flowers and foliage and many appeared in his designs. These included a series of decorated initials or headpieces which were used in the catalogues of the Melbourne Public Library between 1861 and 1880, and have been re-used in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardening*.

Glenda King's paper showed how Tasmania's native plants have inspired craft workers for two centuries. Her illustrations included exquisite examples of embroidery and woodcarving using motifs drawn from clematis, waratah, blue gum, billiardiera, banksia and ferns.

All in all the conference papers touched on issues of attitudes to the native vegetation and its retention and use in gardens, and to wilderness. The meaning of the word "garden" was expanded well beyond its OED meaning of "an enclosed piece of ground devoted to the cultivation of vegetables, flowers or fruit". But we didn't debate what it all meant, and thus one is left to think about it and reach one's own conclusions, which is not a bad outcome for a conference.

The Governor of Tasmania, Sir Guy Green, opened the conference with a thoughtful talk about the Tasmanian environment and gardens and their influences on the place and on Tasmanians. He and Lady Green were gracious hosts at a reception for delegates at Government House.

But Sir Guy's most significant role was to launch *The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens*, which he did with great wit and style. It was a fitting launch for the *Companion*, which is a fantastic, broad and deep compilation of just about everything that one could wish to know about Australian gardens.

We toured the many gardens enthusiastically, without worrying about the issues that the papers had raised. All except Peter Adams' sculpture garden, which is mostly in a natural setting, are traditional gardens associated with old properties displaying the wonderful plants we had gone south to see – euphorbia, hosta, forsythia, hyacinth, lilac, iris, species geraniums, peony, poppy, magnolia, and flowering pear, quince and apple.

Many of the properties were really old, dating from the 1820s and 30s, and the houses and outbuildings were as interesting as the gardens. Intact Georgian buildings are one of the glories of Tasmania, the silver lining of the cloud of poor economic growth, along with beautiful coasts, rivers and landscapes free of blocks of units, shopping malls, fast food shops and car parks. The poor Tasmanians!

The papers from the conference will not be produced as a volume, but a number may appear in *Australian Garden History*.



John Taylor is vice-chair of the Queensland Branch of the Australian History Society. He trained and worked as a forester, was Manager of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and Director of Parks and Gardens for Brisbane City. He lives in Brisbane and combines his interests in plants and gardens with consulting work.

left: *Euphorbia cultivar* 'Tassie Devil' at Ashfield where Barbara Jennings bred it.

right: The entrance arbour to the reconstructed Government Gardens at Port Arthur.



THE GARDEN VISITS – SATURDAY
5 OCTOBER
SUNDAY 6 OCTOBER & MONDAY
7 OCTOBER

BY NINA CRONE

The garden visits are a highlight of the Annual Conference. Tasmania offered a treat.

Ashfield, still maintaining its view of the Derwent in spite of increasing high-rise neighbours. The splendour of trees – 150 year old pears, seedling cherries, an ancient pomegranate, and the more recently planted copper beech. The Euphorbia cultivar raised by Barbara Jennings: ‘Tassie Devil’ indeed! Why not ‘Ashfield’? A dignified garden encouraging leisurely conversation and constantly evoking admiration for its superb palette of plants, understated ornament, and timelessness.

A recently reconstructed garden in the formal style, **Corinda**, has retained the original box hedging and added new pleached limes and a formal parterre. Remarkable for the detail in the cobbled courtyard, paved paths and clipped bay trees. A magnificent site, backed by Mount Wellington and looking across the Derwent.

The excellent booklet *Gardens of Exile* by Julia Clark and Chris Viney described the garden history of **The Port Arthur Historic Site** and the reconstruction of the Government Garden with its fountain, floral borders, arbour and tunnel was impressive. In effect it was a floriferous cage for the wives and children of officials. Individually, many people sought out The Memorial which Torquil Canning describes with insight and sensitivity in ‘A Small Landscape with Great Meaning’. (See pages 11–13)

The **Windgrove Peace Garden and Walk**, introduced the indigenous flora and fauna of the SE coastal area of Tasmania. The sun shone softly encouraging contemplation. Thunder Bay was placid and benign. Any tension, anxiety or world-weariness drifted away as visitors rested on well-crafted seats to admire sublime seascapes. This must be Australia’s most therapeutic garden graced as it is with provocative sculptural works and other intriguing installations in a wilderness landscape.

And on the optional day:

Marlbrook, a restored 1838 house and garden retaining the original carriage drive and surviving oaks, ash and elms. Informal planting softens the formal design of the garden between the house and the highway. Behind the house there is a modern *potager* with whimsical sculptures: a dainty sling-back shoe and a purse. Everything in



this garden is lovingly and intelligently considered before implementation.

Close by is **Oakwood**, dating back to the 1840s, a fine Georgian residence set off by a circular driveway bordered by oaks said to have been planted by Maria Lempriere in the 1850s. Before this, the property belonged to Edwin Tooth of brewing fame and was known as Cornucopia. At present the garden is in the process of renewal.

On the South Esk River, **Stone House**, built about 1830, displays a verdant garden with notable trees – robinia, holly, a huge *Magnolia grandiflora* – and a great collection of hostas and sculpted conifers. The walled kitchen garden contains a venerable walnut and an old mulberry. At one time the property belonged to a branch of the pioneering Archer family.

Originally an old coaching inn, c.1826, **The Jolly Farmer** is now surrounded by cottage gardens filled with shrubs and perennials that enhance the barns and house. Vegetables, fruit-trees, chooks, dogs and the very name exude warmth and welcome. The scale and integration of elements in the garden say much about the skill of the design.

Panshanger dating back to the early 1820s was designed like an 18th century English ‘landscaped’ estate with a house in classical style fronted by sweeping lawns. Established by one of the Archer family, the garden has today become more enclosed with shrubberies screening the house and providing delightful woodland walks above the river. It was a memorable finale to the Tasmanian Conference.

Windgrove Peace Garden
overlooking Thunder Bay.

ITEMS of INTEREST



Top: In my hands at last! Co-editor of *The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens*, Richard Aitken in the Ballroom at Rippon Lea, 4 December, 2002.

Above: L. to R.: Richard Aitken, co-editor of *The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens*, Margaret Darling, Patron of the Australian Garden History Society and one of the instigators of the publication and Peter Watts, Chairman of AGHS.

Right: Also present at the Melbourne launch was the Tyre Swan, the subject of one of the most popular entries in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens* and 'possibly Australia's only indigenous garden ornament'. Photos: Sue Keon-Cohen

The 'Companion' is launched Australia-wide. Since the Governor of Tasmania, Sir Guy Green, launched *The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens* at the National Conference in Hobart, state branches have celebrated the publication with local launches. These have seen a distinguished group of people doing the honours. The Queensland Branch and the Brisbane Institute co-hosted a talk with Richard Aitken and Dr Jeannie Sim to promote the publication. South Australia had Tony Whitehill PSM launching it. In Sydney Leo Schofield was in excellent 'gardening form' to launch the impressive tome in the Royal Botanic Gardens. The Melbourne Branch chose the Ballroom at Rippon Lea as venue for Emeritus Professor David Yencken AO to set the book on its way. The ACT/Monaro/Riverina Branch celebrated the book at its Christmas party at Palarang where Jocelyn Newman did the honours. The Western Australian Branch chose the Japanese Garden at Curtin University as the setting for their launch.



GOOD NEWS ON CALLAN PARK

The NSW Government has responded to community pressure and withdrawn its Master Plan proposing the sale of key areas for residential development. Legislation is currently before State Parliament to protect the site from future sale, ensuring that heritage elements, including parkland and gardens, are preserved.

HERITAGE VICTORIA AT BICKLEIGH VALE

Following the Victorian Branch's action in making 15 nominations to the Heritage Register for Walling Gardens, Heritage Victoria has initiated a desk top study of Walling gardens to develop a priority list. The Heritage Council recently included a visit to Bickleigh Vale in its annual two-day tour of heritage sites. John Isbel, Victorian Branch Treasurer, led the visitors to over a dozen properties within the village convincing them of the significance of the area.

PROJECTS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

The Southern Highlands Branch is involved in negotiations with the Remembrance Driveway Committee to establish a Conservation and Management Plan for areas adjacent to the Hume Highway between Mittagong and Berrima. The branch is also intending to promote community awareness of significant trees in the Wingecarribee Shire by holding a Tree Day later this year. A further area of interest is Rows Hill Cemetery, Mittagong, where the branch hopes to work on fencing, gates and signage.

APPRECIATION

AGHS appreciates the work of Diana Ellerton, Jane Johnson, Beverley and John Joyce, Laura Lewis, Sandi Pullman, Ann Rayment, Kaye and Mike Stokes, and Georgina Whitehead in packing the last issue of the journal - to all, sincere thanks.

DIARY DATES

Valuable Swampy Land!

Sydney - until 1st May 2003 - a display, tracking the early European market gardens of the 1830s and the Chinese market gardens that followed them from the 1880s onwards, at the **George Hanna Memorial Museum and Library**, 2 Hatfield Street, Mascot. Hours: Tuesday to Friday 10am to 6pm and Saturday 9.30am to 12noon. (Museum closed on Monday and Sunday). Presented by the City of Botany and the Botany Historical Trust. Further details from the Curator on 02 9366 3544.

JANUARY

22 Wednesday

Queensland, Brisbane **A General Meeting** will be held in the Friends Room, Queensland Art Gallery from 12noon when the program for the Conference in July will be discussed. All members are welcome to attend.

25 Saturday and 26 Sunday

Victoria, Castlemaine **Working Bees - Tute's Cottage** (Vicroads 287 70) on Saturday and **Buda** (Vicroads 287 4Q). Contact Helen Page (03) 9397 2230

FEBRUARY

6 Thursday

Victoria, Melbourne **Walk and Talk at St Vincent Gardens**, (Melway 2K A5) led by Jill Orr Young. Contact Elizabeth Peck (03) 9867 8180.

13 Thursday

Melbourne - **Lecture by Sir Roy Strong: 'The Artist and the Banquet - a History of Dining'** at 6pm in the Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Federation Square. Admission: \$50 for the National Gallery Women's Association. Enquiries: Mrs Barbara Mayes (03) 9529 1849.

15 Saturday

Queensland, Mount Cotton - **Lunch at Mt Cotton Winery** - and tour of the native gardens.

16 Sunday

Sydney, Botany - **Exhibition Viewing & Illustrated Talk**. Joanne Sippel, Curator of the Exhibition 'Valuable Swampy Land' will speak on the research undertaken for this

exhibition. 4pm at the George Hanna Memorial Museum, City of Botany, 2 Hatfield St, Mascot. AGHS Members \$10 Others \$15 (includes refreshments). Bookings: Malcolm Wilson (02) 9810 0573.

18 Tuesday

Melbourne - **Royal Historical Society of Victoria - Lecture by Richard Aitken** on 'Nationalism and the Australian Garden'. 5.45pm at RHSV, 239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne. Admission: RHSV Members - Free. Others - \$5.50.

19 Wednesday

Victoria, Melbourne **Working Bee - Bishopscourt** (Melway 2G D3) Contact Helen Page (03) 9397 2230

22 Saturday

Victoria, Phillip Island **Working Bee - Churchill Island** (Vicroads 95 G10) Contact Nina Crone (03) 5663 2381

MARCH

2 Sunday

Southern Highlands, Burradoo - **Jazz in the Garden** at Coolliata, an 1880s garden in Burradoo. Enjoy the music and a brunch from 10.30am to 1pm. Contact: Chris Webb (02) 4869 2692.

8 Saturday

Queensland, Brisbane - **Lecture by Jeannie Sim** on 'Ferneries of Shade and Delight' at Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens.

19 Wednesday

Victoria, Melbourne **Working Bee - Bishopscourt** (Melway 2G D3) Contact Helen Page (03) 9397 2230

29-30 Saturday-Sunday

Queensland, Mount Glorious - **Open Garden Days** at Phoenix Sculpture Gardens, Mt Glorious.

29 Saturday

Victoria, Olinda **Working Bee - Folly Farm** (Melway 66 H 6) Contact Helen Page (03) 9397 2230

ADVANCE NOTICE

Sunday 13 April

Sydney Branch - An Outing at Dangar Island. For further information contact Colleen Morris (02) 9660 0573

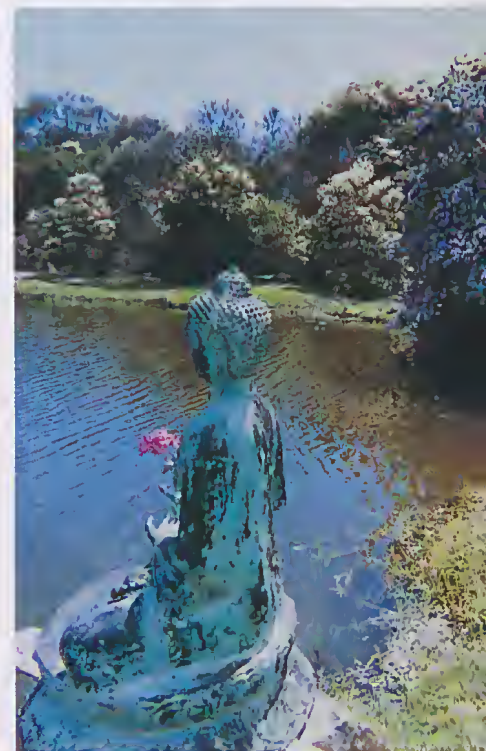
Friday 25- Tuesday 29 April

Victorian Branch - 5-day Bus Trip led by Rodger and Gwen Elliot. *Mungo, Pink Lakes, Hattah-Kulkyne National Parks and Mildura*. Interstate members welcome. Details from Sue Keon-Cohen (03) 5944 3971 or Diana Renou (03) 9417 2098.

11-13 July

Brisbane - 24th Annual National Conference 'Tropical Pleasures'





On Tour

TASMANIAN GARDENS OF THE NORTH AND NORTH-WEST.
BY NINA CRONE

The gardens visited on the post-conference tour introduced the windswept, harsh coastal conditions that had challenged Daniel Thomas. At Low Head Captain John Gunn's **Kuranui** withstands the savage winds that contort and shape artemesia, box thorn and mirror bush. The garden is full of quirky surprises – a snug miniature castle, a chapel protecting a lap pool, nautical relics, a kissing gate, various signalling devices – all comfortable in the shelter of naturally created topiary enhanced by the Captain's shears.

The languorous glup-glub, glup-glub of somnolent green and gold bullfrogs at **Hawley**, on the Rubicon River estuary, was a complete contrast. Simon Houghton created his garden by removing sand and depositing soil on the rocks, and by excavating poorly drained areas to make great sweeps of water in front of the house. Like **Kiranui**, **Hawley** has its chapel where services are held for animals – domestic and native. Simon's philosophy is that a garden is a place where nature is celebrated, not disciplined. By approaching each project with a concept, and then allowing the land to modify and alter it, he feels the final outcome is an expression of the land itself.

Fairie Nielsen's magnificent planting on the steep slopes of a gully at **Pigeon Hill** was inspirational. On the shaded side there are magnolias, cherries, *Malus* and maples. The opposite slope, which gets the late afternoon sun, is planted with hardier trees – birches, maples, *Berberis*, and an under-planting of heaths and heathers. The white trunk of a huge *Eucalyptus viminalis* sets off the brilliant foliage of the maples and a groundcover of massed Irish heath

(*Daboecia*). Fairie's love of trees is evident: *Nothofagus*, *Nyssa*, *Picea omorika* (Serbian spruce) and the birches. She has planted 40 *Betula utilis jacquemontii*. Behind this veritable Shangri-la is the work of a formidable and quite remarkable gardener who cleared and planted steep slopes by roping herself to rocks.

And then she went to work on the hills of the impressive **Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden**, developed by volunteers over the last 20 years. The site, in a 13ha natural amphitheatre, now boasts 20,000 rhododendron plants and 10,000 azalea plants. They certainly breed tough gardeners in northern Tasmania!

John Mott's Chatham Island forget-me-nots, trilliums and English primroses (*Primula Barnhaven*) at **Carlindi Rise** delighted those passionate about plants; as did the splendid collection of rare plants at **Wychwood**, Mole Creek, where the grass labyrinth that is the nursery's logo attracted much interest.

Everyone walked, talked and clicked cameras through **Table Cape Tulip Farm**, **Culzean**, **Red Hill Farm**, **Somercotes**, **Lempriere** and **Richmond**; was informed about seahorses and sea pilots; and enjoyed champagne at Elphin House, Lady Sallie Ferrall's elegant Launceston garden.

above: *Echium* and *Aeonium* at **Hawley**.

top centre: *Liriodendron* and *Protea* at **Carlindi Rise**.

bottom centre: **Table Cape Tulip Farm**.

far top: Looking across the frog pond in the garden at **Hawley**.

far bottom: A serene corner in the garden at **Hawley**.
Photos: Nina Crone